discussions with representatives of Apex Industry Chambers/Associations under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. The following points emerged during discussions:

(i) Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and PHD Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) have evolved a Code of Conduct of Affirmative Action. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has also agreed to soon evolve a similar plan of action.

(ii) Industry Associations are willing to intensify their efforts in developing the skill sets and developing entrepreneurial abilities amongst SC/ST persons.

(iii) There was a general agreement on positive discrimination in employment in favour of SC/ST persons *i.e.* other things being equal SC/ST persons will be given prefenence.

(iv) Industry Chambers are agreeable to reporting of data on SC/ST employment on voluntary basis.

(v) Ombudsman will be appointed by Industry Associations to monitor the compliance with the voluntary Code of Conduct.

Employment for disabled in private sector

*246. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to provide incentives to private sector, to employ physically challenged persons:

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the private sector thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A scheme sanctioned by the Government envisages payment of employer's contribution to Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Employees State Insurance (ESI) for the first three years for providing employment to persons with disabilities. The benefit of the scheme is for the persons with monthly wages up to Rs. 25,000/- per month. The scheme covers all persons with disabilities defined under the Persons with Disabilities Act and National Trust Act.

As the scheme has been sanctioned recently, the reaction of the employers in the Private Sector is still not known.

Adoption of orphan children

†*248. SHRI AJAY MAROO:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the existing provisions regarding adoption of orphan children;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.